

theJournal

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Different Sexual Cycles

Characteristics of Sex and Love Addiction

1. Having few healthy boundaries, we become sexually involved with and/or emotionally attached to people without knowing them.
2. Fearing abandonment and loneliness, we stay in and return to painful, destructive relationships, concealing our dependency needs from ourselves and others, growing more isolated and alienated from friends and loved ones, ourselves, and God.
3. Fearing emotional and/or sexual deprivation, we compulsively pursue and involve ourselves in one relationship after another, sometimes having more than one sexual or emotional liaison at a time.
4. We confuse love with neediness, physical and sexual attraction, pity and/or the need to rescue or be rescued.
5. We feel empty and incomplete when we are alone. Even though we fear intimacy and commitment, we continually search for relationships and sexual contacts.
6. We sexualize stress, guilt, loneliness, anger, shame, fear and envy. We use sex or emotional dependence as substitutes for nurturing care, and support.
7. We use sex and emotional involvement to manipulate and control others.
8. We become immobilized or seriously distracted by romantic or sexual obsessions or fantasies.
9. We avoid responsibility for ourselves by attaching ourselves to people who are emotionally unavailable.
10. We stay enslaved to emotional dependency, romantic intrigue, or compulsive sexual activities.
11. To avoid feeling vulnerable, we may retreat from all intimate involvement, mistaking sexual and emotional anorexia for recovery.
12. We assign magical qualities to others. We idealize and pursue them, then blame them for not fulfilling our fantasies and expectations.

Table of Contents

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous Preamble	4
The Twelve Steps	5
Question of the Day	8

Theme: Different Sexual Cycles

I Still Thrive in the Relationship	10
Having Conversations	12
Intimacy Functions on Many Levels	13
Taking Feelings Into Consideration	14
Different Libidos	16
Being Present for All My Feelings	18

Share Space

My Relationship	25
Share in French and English	27
A Guided Meditation from a Meeting	28

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous Preamble

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition oriented fellowship based on the model pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous.

The only qualification for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. S.L.A.A. is supported entirely through contributions of its membership, and is free to all who need it.

To counter the destructive consequences of sex and love addiction, we draw on five major resources:

1. **Sobriety.** Our willingness to stop acting out in our own personal bottom-line addictive behavior on a daily basis.
2. **Sponsorship/Meetings.** Our capacity to reach out for the supportive fellowship within S.L.A.A.
3. **Steps.** Our practice of the Twelve Step program of recovery to achieve sexual and emotional sobriety.
4. **Service.** Our giving back to the S.L.A.A. community what we continue to freely receive.
5. **Spirituality.** Our developing a relationship with a Power greater than ourselves which can guide and sustain us in recovery.

As a fellowship S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues and seeks no controversy. S.L.A.A. is not affiliated with any other organizations, movements or causes, either religious or secular.

We are, however, united in a common focus: dealing with our addictive sexual and emotional behavior. We find a common denominator in our obsessive/compulsive patterns, which transcends any personal differences of sexual orientation or gender identity.

We need protect with special care the anonymity of every S.L.A.A. member. Additionally we try to avoid drawing undue attention to S.L.A.A. as a whole from the public media.

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The Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A.*

1. We admitted we were powerless over sex and love addiction - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a Power greater than ourselves, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to sex and love addicts, and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.

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The Conference Journal Committee, a service body within Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, publishes the Journal for the good of the international S.L.A.A. membership. Oversight and policy is provided in accordance with the Ninth Tradition.

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In submitting such content to S.L.A.A., the member releases S.L.A.A., any other members of S.L.A.A. and S.L.A.A.'s officers, directors, employees and agents (collectively, the "Releasees") from any and all claims which the member may have against any of the Releasees in connection with the member's submission of content to *the Journal*.

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A State of Grace

April 12

RELATIONSHIP CONFLICT

We have learned by painful experience that life with a sex and love addict cannot and will not be without growing pains and often severe conflict. This is true even, and perhaps especially, in recovery. If we try to keep the surface of the relationship smooth, we begin to compromise our own feelings... Our own success in partnership rests first, as does the addict's recovery on maintaining a sense of personal dignity. – S.L.A.A. Basic Text, Page 64.

It's difficult for my addict brain to look at the big picture when I'm having conflict in my relationship. All I can see is the fear. I'm afraid he's not right for me, I've made a mistake, he'll abandon me because of this particular character defect that we're arguing over, etc. When I talk to my sponsor and fellows, I realize that I'm blowing everything out of proportion. Sometimes conflict can involve deal-breakers. But if I and my Higher Power have chosen well, and if I stick to the principles and tools of the program, relationship conflict can be worked through. Finding a way to work it out and getting through to the other side makes the relationship stronger. In each situation, I remind myself, "Do I want to be right? Or do I want to be happy?" If I hold onto my need to be right instead of looking where I can be of service to my partner, the conflict will last forever. I heard a woman who had been married 40 years say the secret to a happy relationship is to never go to bed angry. If I can take my ego out of the argument, I never go to bed angry.

The Augustine Fellowship. A State Of Grace: Daily Meditations. The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A. Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. Kindle Edition.

To find "A State of Grace," go to www.slaafws.org

Question of the Day & Answers from Yesterday

The Question of the Day for this issue is, “How do you deal with a partner’s different timeframe (less or more sexual desire) and gain intimacy

instead of creating distance?” Here are some insights that were submitted in service from fellow S.L.A.A. members. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two themes are #202 – May/June – Recovery Suggestions – “What advice or suggestions for recovery would you give a newcomer?” Deadline for submissions is March 15, 2023. And #203- July/Aug. – *ABM Issue* – Self-Love as a Tool in Recovery – “How have you learned to love yourself? Combatting insecurity, self-sabotage, and self-destructiveness.” Deadline for submissions is May 15, 2023. Please send answers to www.slaafws.org.

“How do you deal with a partner’s different timeframe (less or more sexual desire) and gain intimacy instead of creating distance?”

In my experience of sober dating so far, I find it can be a challenge when I want to hold back on intimacy while the person I'm dating is on their own schedule and has different ideas. The dating plan I prepared helps me figure out my own timings and pace, along with chats with my sponsor and outreach with other fellows who are dating. Knowing when I will be comfortable to advance to greater levels of intimacy keeps me safe and boundaried as I get to know the individual on a human to human level. If the other pushes to move faster than I would like to go, the programme has given me the ability to restate my boundaries, and if I am not heard, I feel confident enough to let go with love and walk away.

— MIRA

Question of the day

Establishing mutual communication is an important fundamental in building a better partnership. A lot of the time the lines of communication do not transmit completely so my suggestion would be to pray together to a higher power. In other words work together to summarize the problem and turn it over to a higher power, step 3 as a couple. If the individual is not in program and Step Three is not working, then go from Steps Six and Seven to Steps Ten and Eleven, or just Step Seven, then Step Eleven.

-ANONYMOUS

I feel that communication is the basis of forming intimacy. I would set up a time to speak about each other's needs. Almost like a 10 minute meeting we each share for a number of minutes and come up with a compromise and a plan for connection

— CARA L., NY

Communication and compromise

-ANONYMOUS

The S.L.A.A. Basic Text eBook
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I Still Thrive in the Relationship



It has been a difficult road for me, but 4 years into my relationship, I feel like I have gained a lot of perspective in terms of navigating sex with my partner. As a sex addict, I used to have sex in the past to feel better, as a drug. Dating someone who is not a sex addict has been really

confusing, since they don't turn to sex for comfort, entertainment, fun, or to just feel good, as I do. I've learned that while I might want sex more often than my partner, I can live without it and still thrive in the relationship by focusing on the principle of acceptance. These days I am in

the place of “I’d rather have sex with my partner than anyone else in the world, and I will wait until they are ready” rather than complaining about not getting enough sex, pressuring them to have sex when they don’t feel like it, or acting like it’s a dealbreaker when it’s not.

I’ve realized that I didn’t initially choose my partner based solely on sexual attraction or sexual compatibility, but rather on friendship, a spiritual, emotional, intellectual connection, and a mutual willingness to explore intimacy through following the dating plan.

Because the basis of the relationship wasn’t a sexual connection, it’s been harder to learn how to enjoy sex together. I would say that the sex we have is wonderful and fulfilling, but it definitely doesn’t provide an addictive rush or a “high.”

The sex is just one aspect of a relationship built on shared interests and values, quality time spent together, humor, friendship, hobbies, support, and love.

I am so grateful to the program that I’ve been able to heal from my sex addiction and

experience sex within a loving, safe context.

If anyone is struggling with sexual frustration in their relationship, I would just encourage them to look at the bigger picture and focus on what’s going right in the relationship, all that their partner brings to the table, and the overall joy of being together even when not being sexual.

It’s also a great idea to re-focus on top lines. I’ve gotten so focused on top lines that I sometimes forget about sex completely, which is really mind-blowing for a sex addict. Focusing on top lines means I am happier and that I provide a more inviting and nourishing atmosphere for my partner instead of being demanding, deprived, and resentful.

Whether we have sex or not, I want to live life to the fullest and be my best self. At the end of the day, sex with the right person once in a while is far more fulfilling and satisfying than sex 3 times a week with strangers or hookups.

It’s actually the most beautiful experience in the world and I wouldn’t trade it for anything.

— ANONYMOUS

Having Conversations

I so relate to the anorexia that comes up when needing to have conversations about differences in sexual needs and preferences. My partner has at times questioned whether she is asexual and my drive is the highest it's ever been, especially since I'm now comfortable in my sexuality as someone who's not straight.

I feel like I'm discovering sex for the first time. My pre-recovery self would avoid conversations about sex at all costs, eventually buckling from the unmet need and acting out by creating sexual intrigue with a qualifier.

I didn't cheat but this wasn't out of choice, just a lack of opportunity. Gosh that feels uncomfortable to write.

Now I see the beauty in having difficult conversations. Working my Steps 6 and 7 has shown me just how selfish I can be when it comes to sex, entitled almost, and how much I (wrongly) assume about my partner too.

Recently we've had some tough but great conversations and realised we're actually on similar pages when it comes to frequency and kind of sex we want.

It's just that lack of experience with certain kinds of sexual experience, and a long time of no sexual intimacy between us, has created a nervousness with initiating. Just starting a conversation about getting intimate generally feels hard, so starting one about exploring more exciting sexual experiences felt a thousand miles away at one point. But we've had the conversation. It's been really bonding to share about what kind of intimacy we might like, both now and in future. I'm confident that by owning my side of the street and not ignoring my needs, the answers will come. My higher power is on my side.

-ANONYMOUS

Intimacy Functions on Many Levels

My partner and I communicate directly about sex. We both initiate equally, and when someone doesn't want to have sex, we communicate that, and we respect each other's boundaries. For example, when I "turned him down" one time, I asked him if he was upset or disappointed and he said no, that he respects my boundaries and that's that.

Sex should always be consensual. I think having those clear boundaries creates a beautiful space to be able to have really free-flowing strong physical intimacy, so that when someone does express interest, there's no confusion or feeling that sex is being misused or just done out of duty or anything like that. I think the "no" moments create a stronger "yes."

We've also had days where we're both exhausted but we end up having strong desire and had a lot of physical intimacy, and having sex is restorative and healing and

surprising and fun. When we started dating I told him my bottom line of no physical intimacy right away, and he respected it and wanted to know about my bottom lines and my program.

I think because we got to know each other on so many other levels before having sex, there are just a lot more dimensions in the relationship. When someone doesn't want to have sex it's not like that's the only need or the only way to get needs met.

A big part of my recovery is not making sex the primary, most prized value -- which, in my addictive/avoidant patterns, allowed me to avoid intimacy and think I was being edgy and bold etc. Paradoxically, not prizing sex as the primary value in my relationship allows for a much richer sex life because there's so much else that the sexual connection expresses between us.

Intimacy functions on many levels and open, clear, direct

communication is the basic ingredient that has to be there regardless of people's love language etc. It's important to not be afraid of your partner's disappointment or them

potentially disappointing you. You have to take the risk of asking for what you want and not being afraid of getting a 'no,' or of giving a 'no.'

—ANONYMOUS

Editor's note: the following two shares are transcribed from *the Journal* committee meeting at the 2022 S.L.A.A. Annual Business Meeting.

Taking Feelings Into Consideration

Hey, everybody! I'm Anonymous, recovering sex addict.

I've gotten to a stage in my life where I'm talking about sexual cycles. God, I've never felt older in my life! (Laughter from everyone in the room.)

So, my background is that I'm a relationship addict (that's what got me into S.L.A.A.) but also definitely a sex addict. Sex was one of my survival tools.

This included masturbation many times a day as a kid.

I got sober in A.A. in 1978. I came out as gay in 1979. Then I felt like I was owed something because I had such an unhappy life before that. I had lots and lots of sex, anonymous sex. So, I was just very, very sexual – lots of fantasy, obsession and tons of porn.

In 1991 I got sober in S.L.A.A. and thought I would never have sex again. I wondered how it was even possible to have a sober relationship. I was such a

mess, I just didn't think that it was ever going to be possible. And it was years, actually. I was completely celibate from 1991 through 2000.

I had such a hard time finding guys to date but I moved across country from Massachusetts to San Diego. I went to law school, and I had things going on. Every year I got another S.L.A.A. token. And I thought, "Another token of celibacy, Jesus." (Laughter from everyone in the room.)

And then, I met this guy. I knew his mother from A.A., and she introduced me to him.

We started going out. I thought he was kind of boring, didn't have that much of a sense of humor. But I was desperate. And he must have been desperate. (Laughter from everyone in the room.) So it was a perfect combination. And he's five years younger, I mean, that's never bad until now. I actually have had a sober sex life with him.

But it's very interesting that as I have aged, my libido, I guess, has decreased. Because I'm not using sex as an escape anymore, I don't think about it constantly. I'm not always fantasizing about sex.

And at this point our cycles

are different. He would like to have more sex. When we were first together we were more on the same cycle.

As I have aged, we are on different cycles.

The thing I hate the most is trying to be flexible, but what I'm having to try to do is to be more flexible.

I do want to take his feelings into consideration. He is wonderful. He's kind.

He's very calm about it.

So it really is a matter of just kind of negotiating and being honest about where I'm at or what I'm feeling.

It's very helpful to have a partner who is able to recognize in me that I'm not willing to live as a celibate.

And because we've been together so long and we've had the same cycle at one point, that this is just a physical change that's going on as a result of age.

So, it seems to be really about negotiation, some honesty and perhaps some codependence. (Laughter from everyone in the room.)

But I'm very grateful to be sober today.

Grateful to be here today.

Thank you.

—ANONYMOUS

Different Libidos



Hi! Anonymous, gratefully recovering in this program. I'm going to speak on differing libidos.

So, years ago there was a man in another program that I

had my eye on, and we eventually started dating, and he was gorgeous, intelligent, quirky, and had so many fun ideas.

I was just like in la-la land

over him. This is long before I was in program.

By the way, the first time he came to my apartment I initiated a kiss, and I had my eyes open, and I saw him. He closed his eyes. He leaned back his head, and he had this look of horror on his face.

That's so embarrassing for me to admit.

But I persisted. He was going to be my boyfriend.

Years later in program, I learned that when a man tells you who he is, listen.

So, it evolved that our sexual libidos were quite different.

In two years we had intimate relations about four times, and each time they were a little weird.

Looking back, I think that he might have been dissociating during those times.

My libido is much higher than four times in two years, and my anger started to grow.

In response, his anger started to grow. The relationship sort of blew up in

an angry fire.

Luckily, we broke it off. But looking back, did I ever sit down with him and say, "You know, I'm crazy about you but I would like to have a little more touch. Can we work on this? What works for you? What works for me?"

On some level, I do regret that I didn't do that.

I think perhaps I wouldn't have gotten as angry. But I don't think it would have done much.

He was the way he was. What I needed to do was get out of the relationship early, when it clearly wasn't going to work for me, and before it got angry and destructive.

So, I certainly think of that as a learning experience, and, interestingly, that was my last relationship before a fifteen year hiatus of total anorexia. And so, I look back on that relationship as a learning experience and try and glean more from it to help me look at myself.

Thank you.

—ANONYMOUS

Being Present for All My Feelings



“From the standpoint of shared vulnerability, it was no longer a matter of ‘Who’s right?’ or ‘Whose ‘rhythm’ is more reasonable?’ but, rather, ‘How, given the unavoidable nature of this conflict, can we negotiate around it constructively?’” ... In some ways our lives as sober sex and love addicts had been simpler before partnership, because having no sex had been easier to handle than working this

issue out with another.” Page 151, *The S.L.A.A. Basic Text-How do you deal with a partner’s different timeframe (less or more sexual desire) and gain intimacy instead of creating distance?*

“From the standpoint of shared vulnerability,”

Before S.L.A.A., vulnerability was not an option. I could not show weakness. I didn’t trust myself or other people. I

was in an abusive relationship for nine years, so vulnerability meant that I would get hurt and my life would be in danger.

S.L.A.A. taught me how to have boundaries, how to trust myself and God and then other people. I'm with a partner today who I can trust. I can share my feelings and trust that he will listen. Sometimes it takes some explaining and conversation that seems like hard work, but with patience we both understand each other.

“Shared vulnerability”

Before S.L.A.A., I didn't think men were ever vulnerable.

I grew up in a home where men were supposed to be strong and silent breadwinners and women were supposed to be feminine support systems. (That's not always the way it was but I guess that was the goal.)

My abusive boyfriend never shared hurt feelings. If his feelings were hurt, he got in a fistfight and ran off into the night to isolate and deal with his pain on his own. Vulnerability was weakness. If I ever shared feelings, I got hit. I started to believe this was

normal and everyone would react that way. So I bottled up my feelings for most of my life.

When I started attending S.L.A.A. meetings and heard men sharing the same feelings I had been feeling and crying about it in front of a crowded room, I realized that men were just like me. Having a safe place to be vulnerable and share openly, where no one saw this as weakness and didn't use it against me was healing for me.

Because of my sober dating plan, I really got to know my partner before getting into a relationship with him. I learned over time that I could trust him and share my feelings openly and honestly. And I knew that I had Higher Power and S.L.A.A. to help me when it was difficult to trust my partner.

Sometimes character defects would get in the way and I would want to hide in anorexia. I didn't want to do the work of sharing openly and honestly.

Twelve-Step literature, outreach, sharing at meetings and fellowship helped keep me out of anorexia. My partner is very uplifting, optimistic and kind. He is very patient and understanding when either one

of us has character defects that crop up and trip us up.

My character defects aren't me. They are temporary if I pray and do Twelve-Step work.

“It was no longer a matter of ‘Who’s right?’”

When I talk about the idea of being “right” in sexual matters, I also think of being right in general. Sex before S.L.A.A. was always a power play. Who has control over who? I always wanted the power in the relationship because I was fearful of abandonment or betrayal.

I always had to be right because I thought being wrong meant I would get hit or left alone. Abandonment is like death to a sex and love addict like me.

My first example of a relationship power play was from my parents. They always had yelling matches arguing about everything. The arguing always led to one of them going to the stack of encyclopedias and either proving the other wrong or sheepishly admitting their mistake and clamming up. The victorious “right” person was glowing and happy and the “wrong” person would be depressed and would quietly sneak off to their room alone.

I learned in 12-Step programs that I don't need to be perfect or right all the time. I just need to be honest and show people who I really am. I need to love myself and accept or at least tolerate everyone else for who they are.

I used to believe that if a relationship was to work out both partners had to be identical. If that meant I changed myself in ways that weren't good for me, that was ok because I was sacrificing for love. But I've learned if I kept sacrificing for love there would be nothing left of me to actually love.

I learned in my relationship that my idea of being right about sex isn't my partner's idea of “right.”

Sex before program was a performance. I thought that as long as I was doing it every day everything would be ok with the relationship. Sex was the glue that would keep the relationship together. But I was usually cheating on them or they were cheating on me or both. Sex wasn't a by-product of sharing, commitment and trust until I had been sober in S.L.A.A. for a time.

I had never heard complaints about sex in a relationship. I never talked about sex before S.L.A.A. I was

too ashamed. I read a self-help book once that said we all learn that, “sex is dirty, save it for the one you love.”

I couldn't even say the word “masturbation” when I walked into my first S.L.A.A. meetings and heard a lot of people say the word in their shares. I shared for years and could only say “the m word.”

When the shame I felt around sex lifted and I felt self-esteem, I was able to talk openly with my sponsor and fellows. But when it came to talking to my partner, I felt shame if he was dissatisfied. I also didn't want to discuss it because it brought up a lot of fear that he would leave me if he wasn't happy with our sex life.

We've been partners for 20 years. We've had a happy sex life at times and problems sometimes. But being able to be open and honest has kept us together. And knowing that we aren't always going to think alike helps us be less judgmental. We don't have to have a perfect sex life; A healthy sex life and a happy marriage is our goal.

...or “Whose ‘rhythm’ is more reasonable?”

I came into S.L.A.A. a sex addict. In my past, I needed a

lot of sex like a drug addict needs drugs. Both my husband and I struggle with anorexia in sobriety.

When either of us has the courage to approach the subject of sex or anorexia and we have a conversation about it, it makes it more likely that we will be intimate in the near future. I'm grateful that we can admit to each other and our fellows that we are sexually and emotionally anorexic sometimes.

And sometimes we can only start the conversation when we know that sex can't happen (like when we're on an hour long drive to an event). But that's ok.

We are kind to each other, knowing that we're fearful of the conversation. We're patient with the other's feelings. Sometimes one of us expresses shame, disappointment, fear of intimacy or difficult feelings. The other tries to be open and not take it personally.

It's difficult to not take it personally when it's about something so intimate. But sometimes it's not about what the other person is or is not doing — it's about perception or a fantasy of how it should be. Sometimes it's not an easy fix. We are patient if it's an ongoing problem. We realize

we are both good people with different opinions and we're in this together.

I'm grateful he is kind when I feel crazy or struggle with intimacy. I try to be there for him in the same way. (I'm probably more selfish and I work on getting rid of that character defect every day.)

...but, rather, “How, given the unavoidable nature of this conflict, can we negotiate around it constructively?”

Unavoidable nature of this conflict? I always thought sex should be easy. But it's not something that should be pursued or thought of all the time at the expense of other things in my life like it was in the days of my addiction. Career, chores, hobbies, friends, and a wider experience of life should be important also. And sometimes we still deal with the wreckage of the past. We can't have fun all the time. But we talk about ways to have fun and still meet our responsibilities.

The conflict comes from character defects. Character defects cause problems in my relationship. Here's some that effect my partnership:

1. *My negative magnifying*

mind.

I read my partner's mind and get it wrong. I saw a television show once that had a married couple who argued all the time. They played a marriage game to find out how well they knew each other.

It was a game that revealed all the malicious assumptions they were making about each other. They were reading each other's minds and thinking the other person's intentions were always bad. The host asked, “Is their marriage a source of strength or a handcuffed march to the grave?” The game was the married couple's chance to see how accurately they knew each other. But if they only saw what they wanted to see based on their own ungenerous assumptions, they would sink in quicksand (the same way a relationship suffers when we make ungenerous assumptions).

The host asked, “Why does your wife open the window in the middle of the night?”

The husband answered, “To wake me up.”

Host: “Correct. Follow up question—Why does she want you awake?”

Husband: “To make me miserable.”

Host: “Incorrect. She does it

because she confronts her deepest fears in the middle of the night and she feels less alone when you're awake too."

I play this game with my husband when I listen to the addict voice in my mind.

Host: "Why don't you initiate sex with your husband?"

Me: "He will reject me because he's anorexic."

In order to stay out of the quicksand of addiction, I tell my husband my fears. He admits he's anorexic but working on it and would like me to initiate.

Host: "Why does your husband have physical difficulties?"

Me: "Because he's not attracted to me anymore."

Correct answer: He's not feeling well sometimes and is getting older so it happens sometimes. He still finds you attractive. Again, I talk to him about my fears. We both could exercise to feel better and have more energy.

Host: "Why is your husband kind to everyone and social?"

Me: "Because he's attracted to other women."

I know that's just the addict voice and I don't have to listen to it. I've never had a reason to mistrust him. The addict voice

likes to make me go down a negative path where I'm cornered. It hopes I will one day act out over it. I always tell it to go away, I'm not listening right now.

Host: "This is a question for husband. Why does your wife refuse to do her share of the chores (mop the floor and dust) even though you wash the dishes, make her coffee, sweep and clean the kitty litter every day?"

Husband: "Because she doesn't love me anymore."

Host: "Wrong. It's because she feels overwhelmed sometimes and dealt with a rageaholic father who had OCD about chores when she was growing up."

Host: "Don't think negative thoughts about your spouse. You've been good partners for 20 years. Err on the side of positivity. Don't assume your partner doesn't care. Even if you're wrong, Higher Power is on your side and won't let you down. You never look foolish in the eyes of people who truly care about you."

"In some ways our lives as sober sex and love addicts had been simpler before partnership, because having no sex had

been easier to handle than working this issue out with another.”

I wanted to live in a fantasyland growing up. I never wanted to get older and have responsibilities. Being sober and aware takes me out of fantasyland. It's not so easy to control the real world the way I can in fantasyland. Tiredness, uncomfortable feelings, physical problems or trauma can all magically disappear in the fantasy world.

The real world is distracting. Being aware is difficult and emotionally draining sometimes. But every time I bring God into the situation, I feel calm and capable.

And I don't have to be afraid to have fun.

When I first got sober in S.L.A.A., I was on a pink cloud. I was having so much fun going to fellowship and S.L.A.A. parties. I had such intimate loving friendships. No contact with men was so freeing. Once I got over the initial pain of withdrawal and got through all the Steps, my life opened up and I thought I could live without sex in exchange for this new freedom and a serene life. But God had other ideas for my life and I'm glad he did.

My partnership has been a true gift.

Sex isn't always a perfect experience but I'm always happy that I tried for intimacy instead of anorexia. I'm with a really great guy and I like and love him a lot!

One final note on this topic.

I'm abstinent off of flour and sugar in a Twelve-Step food program. I've eaten healthy food in healthy portions for 19 years. I thought life and eating would be dull without the junk food I ate in the days of my addiction. But I love my food. And I can actually taste the food I'm eating. In the days of my addiction, I was mindlessly bingeing, shoving the food in mouth so fast I couldn't even taste it. And after a binge I always felt sick and regretted it.

My sex and love addiction is similar because when sex was a performance, I didn't pay attention to how I was feeling. I don't get the emotional hangover and I don't put myself in dangerous situations. Remembering this helps me be patient with different sexual cycles.

— ANONYMOUS

Share space

My Relationship

Hi All, I don't know about you but Valentine's day was a tough day this year, a real roller coaster of emotions. The day before that my wonderful husband and I celebrated the 11th year of our engagement.

Eleven years ago, I thought for sure he would propose on Valentine's day, but he surprised me instead, by proposing the day before Valentine's day. Now in our almost 10th year of marriage, I find it the hardest of all. The anorexia is a challenge, times of fear, anger, worry. Does my husband still love me? Is he sick of me? Will he be faithful? The thing of it is, believe it or not, this is progress (not perfection) for me.

In all my previous relationships I was so selfish and self-centered. All I ever cared about was what I

thought about him; it was all about me, what I wanted, and what I felt. Did I still love him? Would I be faithful? Was I sick of Him? Catch my drift? In recovery, I got a good hard look at myself. In step 4, I looked at my resentments, and my instincts gone awry. I realized how petty and immature I had been, and then the pendulum swung the other way, which is still not what God wants from me, but is better by far than the other way. I know it's not healthy for me to drift in to fear and worry either though. I've really been working, with the help of HP (Higher Power), to release these character defects, to be loving, peaceful, patient, gentle, faithful, kind, and have self-control. On many days the by-product of this has been peace, even joy sometimes. I

admit, I still struggle with anorexia. I still have the addict thinking (lust, intrigue), which had always caused me to abandon my relationship early on.

So little by little, I believe I am moving in right direction, but I have to be careful not to drift into worry, remorse, and self-pity. I have to keep searching, to know my HP better. I have to work with others, be of service, and make

amends when I'm wrong. I want to stop thinking about what he thinks of me, what anyone thinks of me; it's none of my business. Instead, I want to think about what does HP think of me? I've discovered: He loves me so!!! I am the apple of His eye. Today, He is my number one Valentine.

May God bless you and keep you.

— ANONYMOUS

An Invitation For You

Enlarge your recovery by allowing others to get the same benefit that you get from reading *the Journal*. It is a great way to carry S.L.A.A.'s message of hope and practice the Twelfth Step. The fellowship needs volunteers of all skills and levels of availability. Here's what you can do:

- Become a Journal Representative for your intergroup or home group, encouraging the use of *the Journal* as a source of topics, letting people know that there are Journals for sale, and ensuring that plenty of Journal subscription cards are always on the literature table.
- Visit a local organization that deals with sex and love addicts in your area, bringing copies of *the Journal* along with a few pamphlets. The institution may be a treatment facility, a judicial entity, a large recovery club that welcomes varied literature, or a hospital.

Contact info: <http://www.slaafws.org/contact/journaleditor>

French

Je ne me trouvais presque jamais aussi attirante que lorsque j'étais en relation, et je ne me faisais jamais aussi petite que lorsque j'étais célibataire. J'ai surmonté ce trouble de dépendance et d'anorexie en faisant de nouvelles activités, en rencontrant des nouvelles personnes et en m'ouvrant à ma spiritualité (retraites, meetings, messes, cercles Quakers). Cette rencontre avec mon corps et ma spiritualité me donnent confiance en moi et en ma sobriété.

-KELLY-JOY, MONTRÉAL

English

I would never find myself as attractive as when I was in a relationship, and I'd never make myself as small when I was single. I got over this cycle of acting out and anorexia by doing new activities, meeting new people and by opening up to my spirituality (retreats, meetings, mass, Quaker circles). Meeting my body and my spirituality allow me to have more self-confidence and sobriety.

-KJ, MONTREAL

A Guided Meditation from a Meeting



Settle into meditation just where you're sitting now.
Either close your eyes or just lower your gaze — whatever
helps you to bring your focus inward

And notice your inner experience.
What is it like?
Notice any physical sensations.
Notice what your body feels like to sit in whatever position
you are sitting in.
Notice your breathing– air flowing in and out.
If there are any noises, let them come into your awareness and
push them out of your mind.
Imagine you are sitting under a tree. Label the leaves of the
tree with any intrusive thoughts. Let the leaves blow away with
the wind.
Are you in this moment?
When thoughts come in, whatever it is,
just notice it.
Welcome it– whatever is arising in your experience-
even if it's unpleasant- even if you would rather it wasn't
around.
Allow your experience exactly as it is in this moment.
If there is an emotional feeling, experience it.
Experience what is alive in you,
in your body, your feelings.
Does it change as you observe it?
Higher Power is with you exactly as you are.
Perhaps there are colors, more textures.
Experience them.
See a moment.
And now bring yourself back into the room.
Slowly and gently open your eyes.
Come back and see you, connect with the world around you.
Thank you for sharing this experience

—ANONYMOUS



THE INSPIRATION LINE

Your 24-Hour Sponsor

215-574-2120

CELEBRATES

500,000 CALLS!

Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup, originators of the Inspiration Line, want to thank Fellowship Wide Services and *the Journal* for supporting the Inspiration Line. GDVI wants to acknowledge the 15 volunteers from all over the US & Canada that leave inspirational messages on the Line and credit them for making this huge milestone possible: Alicia, California, Alyce, Montreal, Canada, Alyson, Pennsylvania, Bob, Pennsylvania, Brenda, Maryland/Florida, Chris, California, John, Florida, Kip, Connecticut, Leah, New York, Mark, New Mexico, Matt, Pennsylvania, Natalie, Pennsylvania, Rich, Massachusetts, Sean, New Mexico, Shelly, New York, Steve D., Pennsylvania, and Zoe, Pennsylvania.

S.L.A.A. Signs of Recovery

1. We seek to develop a daily relationship with a Higher Power, knowing that we are not alone in our efforts to heal ourselves from our addiction.
2. We are willing to be vulnerable because the capacity to trust has been restored to us by our faith in a Higher Power.
3. We surrender, one day at a time, our whole life strategy of, and our obsession with the pursuit of romantic and sexual intrigue and emotional dependency.
4. We learn to avoid situations that may put us at risk physically, morally, psychologically or spiritually.
5. We learn to accept and love ourselves, to take responsibility for our own lives, and to take care of our own needs before involving ourselves with others.
6. We become willing to ask for help, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and learning to trust and accept others.
7. We allow ourselves to work through the pain of our low self-esteem and our fears of abandonment and responsibility. We learn to feel comfortable in solitude.
8. We begin to accept our imperfections and mistakes as part of being human, healing our shame and perfectionism while working on our character defects.
9. We begin to substitute honesty for self-destructive ways of expressing emotions and feelings.
10. We become honest in expressing who we are, developing true intimacy in our relationships with ourselves and others.
11. We learn to value sex as a by-product of sharing, commitment, trust and cooperation in a partnership.
12. We are restored to sanity, on a daily basis, by participating in the process of recovery.

